

- Fig. 60. An upper view of the tongue, glottis, &c. of *Upupa minor*: *g*, gland, lateral and behind the orifice of the glottis.
- Fig. 61. The cleaned hyoid or tongue-bones of the same bird (*U. minor*).
- Fig. 62. Hyoidean apparatus of the common Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*.
- Fig. 63. Left humerus of *Promerops caffer*, shown from behind.
- Fig. 64. Left tarsus of the same bird, anterior aspect.
- Fig. 65. The same tarsus posteriorly.
- Fig. 66. Left tibia or mid leg-bone of *Promerops caffer*, its inner surface.
- Fig. 67. The knee-joint end or upper articular surfaces of this tibia and the fibula, enlarged two diameters: *t*, tibia; *f*, fibula; *at*, anterior tibial eminence or cnemial tubercle; *e*, external tibial tuberosity; *i*, inner tibial tuberosity.
- Fig. 68. A front view of the same tibia and fibula entire.
- Fig. 69. The upper end of the left tarsus of *Promerops caffer*, about twice the natural size.
- Fig. 70. The lower end of the same tarsus, also magnified two diameters.
- Fig. 71. Sternum of the Black Ibis, *I. aterrimus*.
- Fig. 72. Clothed tarsus and sole, right foot of *Promerops caffer*.
- Fig. 73. An inner view, in profile, of the same foot and tarsus.
- Fig. 74. Clothed tarsus and sole of right foot of *Rhinopomastus cyanomelas*.
- Fig. 75. Inner aspect of the same limb.
- Fig. 76. Sole of the left foot of the Red-billed Ibis, *I. erythrorhynchus*.
- Fig. 77. The lower limb of the common Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*.
- Fig. 78. Sole and hinder surface of scutellate tarsus of the same Hoopoe: I, II, III, and IV. denote the consecutive toes in the above seven figures.

XXIV.—Notes on 'Stray Feathers'*. By W. T. BLANFORD, F.G.S., C.M.Z.S.

THE appearance of a new periodical, solely devoted to Indian ornithology, and edited by Mr. Allan O. Hume, deserves more than a passing notice. Mr. Hume is not only, as he modestly states on his titlepage, the editor, but also the author of the eleven different papers contained in the only number of his magazine which has hitherto reached England. Valuable as these papers are, and important as are the additions made by them to our knowledge of the avifauna of India, the first feeling with many Anglo-Indian ornithologists will probably be one of regret that the labour spent upon this number by Mr.

* 'Stray Feathers,' No. 1. November 1872. Edited by Allan Hume. Calcutta: T. Black & Co. London: Bumpus.

Hume has not been devoted to a further instalment of his most useful 'Scrap-book,' a work the real value of which is necessarily far less appreciated by European naturalists than by those who, in India, far from museums and libraries, are engaged in studying the avifauna of the country, and to whom a book pointing out what is already known, and what remains for inquiry, may save many an hour of useless toil spent in ascertaining facts already well known to others.

The objects aimed at in '*Stray Feathers*,' and the reasons for commencing a new journal, are stated in a short "Avis au Lecteur" on the cover of the present number, and in a few lines printed on the back of the titlepage. Mr. Hume complains that he has sent the descriptions of new species to England for publication, and that his papers have been kept unpublished until he was anticipated by a brother ornithologist; and he invites all Indian ornithologists "to secure the prompt publication of every new species by inscribing its name and diagnosis in some '*Stray Feather*,' which will freely open its pages to all comers." I fear the labours of Indian ornithologists, I mean those who care more for ascertaining facts than describing new species, will be increased if every collector living away from museums and books of reference is invited to give a name to each bird which he cannot identify. Most of us who have written on scientific subjects in India, or in other countries distant from Europe, know the disadvantages under which we suffer in sending MS. papers for publication in England; and although my own experience has not been so unfortunate as Mr. Hume's, I should be very glad to be obliged to publish nothing at a distance. But I feel that whatever may be the inconvenience involved in sending papers to Europe, it will be but little diminished by intrusting them, instead, to the mercies of a Calcutta printer, and to the chances of a magazine described by its editor as one of those articles which "no one can expect . . . to be very regular in their appearance." The success or failure of '*Stray Feathers*,' will of course depend upon the amount of assistance received by Mr. Hume from his brother ornithologists; and the experience of a few months will decide better than any thing else whether

such a periodical supplies a real want or not ; but it is only right to point out that the 'Proceedings' of the Asiatic Society of Bengal have, for some years past, been published regularly every month*, and that all short papers received by the Society are therein printed, so that, even without Mr. Hume's periodical, there is no difficulty in securing the prompt publication in India of all descriptions of new species.

Proceeding to the different papers in detail, I may perhaps be allowed first to refer to one which relates to a species of Horned Lark, described by myself from Sikkim, and to ask pardon for my own sins of commission. After reading Mr. Hume's account, and after the examination of several specimens of *Otocorys longirostris* in Mr. Gould's collection and elsewhere, I think it highly probable that *O. elwesi*, described by me in the P. A. S. B. 1871, p. 227 (and more fully in J. A. S. B. 1872, pt. ii. p. 62), is merely a variety of the first-named species. The differences in coloration are certainly, as stated by Mr. Hume, merely seasonal ; and so is, I believe, the change in the tarsus from brown to black ; for I find in a large series of *O. penicillata* collected in Persia and lying before me, that there is a perceptible distinction in the colour of the legs between young birds and adults, although the difference is much less than in the case of *O. longirostris* and *O. elwesi*. That the bill of a Lark should vary in length from 0·36 to 0·6 inch is certainly very startling ; and I must say that the specimens of *Otocorys* belonging to this form which I have hitherto seen from Central Asia, Lake Baikal, &c. belong to the short-billed type ; but still variation appears to be the rule, and considerable difference in dimensions is common amongst Larks, as has been shown by Sharpe and Dresser in their article on *Alauda arvensis* in the 'Birds of Europe,' and as appears to be the case in specimens of *Galerida cristata* which I have before me.

It is only just to Mr. Hume to admit that, as he states in 'Stray Feathers,' he wrote to me in 1871 to tell me that the Sikkim Horned Lark was identical with that from Cashmere ;

* Except for two months in the autumn, in which the Society does not meet.

but my description of *O. elwesi* was in print before I received his letter.

I think that, so far as separating a bird on insufficient grounds is excusable, my mistake in the case of *O. elwesi* may be pardoned; for I find that better ornithologists than myself had long since considered the short-billed race distinct from *O. longirostris*. The former extends to Siberia; and specimens from that country have found their way into European collections under the name of "*O. albigula*, Brandt." This name, however, does not appear to have been published by the great naturalist of St. Petersburg; and the *O. albigula* of Bonaparte's '*Conspectus*,' p. 246, is clearly *O. penicillata*, Gould (vel *scriba*, Bp.).

Now, as one good turn deserves another, I must point out that some of Mr. Hume's supposed novelties will accompany *Otocorys elwesi* to "the limbo of synonyms." The first paper in '*Stray Feathers*' contains the descriptions of no less than eleven birds which Mr. Hume considers new to science. He, however, in a few paragraphs preceding the descriptions, points out that he does not dogmatically assert that all are positively new; he has been unable to identify them, and he considers the most ready means of ascertaining whether they are new or not is to publish descriptions. That this means will be successful is probable; whether it be the *best* plan to name birds which it is found difficult to identify, on the chance of their being new, is, of course, matter of opinion.

The first species described, *Ptionoprogne pallida*, from Sind, is *Cotyle obsoleta*, Cab., an African Rock-Martin. Like Mr. Hume, I obtained this bird in Sind and Baluchistan; and I have compared my specimens with African skins in the British Museum. The second species, *Saxicola alboniger*, a large form allied to *S. picata*, Blyth, is, to the best of my belief, new. It certainly is not *S. leucopygia**, Brehm; nor is it

* Mr. Hume says he cannot find the description of this bird. It will be found in the Journ. f. Ornith. 1858, p. 66, and is from Egypt, not Palestine. It is also described in Shelley's '*Birds of Egypt*,' pp. 79, 80. The outer tail-feathers are entirely white, as in *S. monacha*, and the breast and abdomen black.

a form of *S. monacha*,—both of which Mr. Hume suggests as possible. No. 3, *Pellorneum palustre*, has been twice described before, fortunately always under the same name:—first, as mentioned by Mr. Hume in a foot-note, by Mr. Gould in the 'Birds of Asia,' pt. xxiv. (Ibis, 1872, p. 188); secondly by Dr. Jerdon himself, in the paper published, after his death, in 'The Ibis' for July 1872, p. 300.

Puffinus persicus is described as a new species of Shearwater from the Gulf of Oman. Unfortunately I did not myself obtain this bird when collecting in the same seas, and Mr. Hume has but a single specimen. It is very difficult, in so puzzling a genus as *Puffinus*, to determine the affinities of his bird from the description. It is said to be too small for *P. anglorum* and too large for *P. obscurus*—the length of the former being given by Yarrell as 15 inches, and the wing 9·5, whilst the corresponding measurements in the latter, according to the same author, are 11 and 6·75, and in the new species 13 and 7; but the quill-feathers not being fully grown in the type example of *P. persicus*, it is suggested that the perfect wing probably measures 8 or 8·25 inches. Merely pausing to express my surprise that a veteran field-ornithologist like Mr. Hume places the smallest dependence upon the lengths of birds as given in European works on ornithology, since no one knows better than he does that these are nearly always taken from dried skins, I may mention that the *P. obscurus* of Gmelin is founded upon the Dusky Petrel of Latham, Syn. vol. vi. p. 416, the length of which is given as 13 inches, and which came from Christmas Island*—that the wings, in two specimens of *P. obscurus* in the British Museum, measure 7·3 and, 7·75 inches, and, in three skins of *P. anglorum* from the Mediterranean, two have the wing 8·75 and the other 8·5 in length; specimens of *P. anglorum* from the British Islands agree better with Yarrell's measurements.

* There are two islands of this name—one in the North Pacific, about halfway between the Sandwich and Society Islands, the other S.W. of the coast of Sumatra. It is uncertain from which Latham's type was obtained; but in either case it came from either the Indian or Pacific Ocean, not from the Atlantic.

It is evident at once that there is but little room to insert a species between *P. anglorum* and *P. obscurus* on the score of size. It is, however, clear that *P. persicus* is not *P. anglorum*, being distinguished, 1st, by its much shorter tarsi and mid toe, which are given by Mr. Hume as measuring respectively 1.5 and 1.45, whilst in several specimens of *P. anglorum* I find them to average 1.75 and 1.7; 2nd, by the coloration of the sides of the head. In *P. persicus* the white of the throat extends nearly up to the eye, and covers half the lores, whilst in *P. anglorum* the dark colour of the upper parts covers the lores, and extends some distance below the eye. In both these characters *P. persicus* agrees with *P. obscurus*.

A specimen of *P. obscurus*, from the New Hebrides, in the British Museum, measures, wing 7.75 inches, tarsus 1.6, mid toe 1.55, bill in a straight line from forehead to point 1.2, and agrees with Mr. Hume's description of *P. persicus* in all characters except the two following:—In the latter bird there is said to be a white line round the eye prolonged backwards from the posterior angle for from a quarter to half an inch; in the British-Museum specimen this is less developed, the white not appearing above the eye nor being prolonged so far backward. *P. persicus* is said to have the sides, axillaries, flanks, and under wing-coverts near the body deep brown, whilst in the New-Hebrides specimen they are white. But *P. obscurus* (if, as all writers seem to agree, both Atlantic and Pacific birds, despite slight differences in dimensions &c., belong to this species) is evidently very variable; and Atlantic specimens have the flanks and axillaries brown, as in the bird described by Mr. Hume.

On the whole I do not think there is sufficient distinction shown to justify the separation of *P. persicus*, which will, I think, prove to be a variety of *P. obscurus*.

To *Puffinus persicus* follow two species, *Pomatorhinus obscurus*, from mount Abu, and *Ephialtes brucei*, from Ahmadnagar, probably well-marked forms. Then we have a sixth Indian species assigned to the genus *Drymoipus*, and called *D. insignis*; it is said to be allied to *D. sylvaticus*, Jerdon, but distinguished from Dr. Jerdon's description of the latter

by the coloration of the tail. Mr. Hume says he has never seen *D. sylvaticus*. I am greatly mistaken if there be not a specimen in the Asiatic Society's Museum in Calcutta, in bad condition it is true, but which should suffice to determine whether the tail resembles that described in *D. insignis*. Mr. Hume's *D. rufescens* (Ibis, 1872, p. 110) has been shown by Dr. Stoliczka (J. A. S. B. 1872, vol. xli. pt. 2, p. 241) to be *D. Jerdoni*, Blyth (*conf.* Jerdon, Birds of India, vol. ii. p. 180). Both Mr. Hume and Dr. Stoliczka retain the genus *Drymoipus* for these Indian birds. It is greatly to be wished that they would define its characters and show how it is to be distinguished from the African *Drymæca*.

A new *Ninox* from the Nicobar Islands, *N. obscurus*, is next described, followed by *Mirafra immaculata*, sp. nov., a species distinguished from *M. assamica* by being browner in colour above, with few and ill-defined striations, more rufous below, with scarcely any trace of spots on the breast. As only a single specimen from Deobund, a hill near Masuri, has been procured, it is impossible to help suggesting that this bird may be merely an individual variety of *M. assamica*, which occurs in the neighbourhood, but apparently at lower elevations, as we know that all Larks are liable to variation in precisely the characters pointed out—the greyer or more rufous coloration, and the distinctness of the dorsal striation and pectoral spots. Whether *M. immaculata* is a well-marked species or not can only be determined by a careful search for additional specimens.

Of the last two novelties on the list, *Procarduelis mandellii* is my *P. rubescens*, published, with a figure, in the 'Proceedings of the Zoological Society' for 1871, p. 693, pl. lxxiv.; and *Eudromias tenuirostris* is, I think, undoubtedly founded on a young specimen of *Ægialitis hartingi*, Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1870, p. 136, pl. xii., described from the Yang-tse-Kiang in China. Mr. Harting, to whom I am indebted for an opportunity of examining a specimen of Swinhoe's species, agrees with me in thinking the two identical.

In his remarks on *Procarduelis mandellii*, Mr. Hume says that both it and *Propasser saturatus*, W. Bl., were distin-

guished by Mr. Mandelli from their allies, and leaves it to be inferred that I had not acknowledged the fact in the latter case. I mentioned in my description of the *Procarduelis* that Mr. Mandelli had sent it and *P. nipalensis* to me, and had pointed out their distinctness; but *P. saturatus* was sent to me by the same energetic ornithologist, together with a large number of other birds, for determination, and without any indication that its discoverer considered it a new species. Mr. Hume doubts whether *P. saturatus* may not, despite Moore's description, be *P. pulcherrimus*, Hodgson. To determine this question I have examined Mr. Hodgson's type specimens of the species last named, in the British Museum. They differ completely from *P. saturatus*. But still I doubt whether the latter name can stand; for the bird described by me appears to be the same as *Carpodacus edwardsii*, Verreaux, from Eastern Thibet (Nouv. Archives du Musée, Bull. vi. 1870, p. 58). M. Verreaux's paper, however, does not appear to have been received in London in time for mention in the 'Zoological Record' for 1870 (*vide* Ibis, 1872, p. 465, and Zool. Rec. for 1871, pp. 40, 66), and certainly had not reached India when I published the description of *P. saturatus* in September 1871 (Proc. A. S. B. 1871, p. 216); so I may, I think, be held excused for not having noticed the earlier description.

The second paper in '*Stray Feathers*' mentions the occurrence of *Falco barbarus* in India, two specimens having been obtained, one by Dr. Stoliczka, in Kachh, the other by Mr. Blewitt, in the Narsingpúr district of the central provinces. I learn from Mr. Sharpe that there has for some years been an Indian specimen of this bird in the British Museum; the locality, however, is not quoted in Mr. Gray's Hand-list. Passing over a very interesting account of the breeding of *Elanus melanopterus* (v. *ceruleus*) in India with the remark that Mr. Layard must be added to the number of those who have described this bird as laying white eggs (Ibis, 1868, p. 242), I must make a few remarks on Mr. Hume's attempt to reduce into order the difficult question of Indian Pied Wagtails. I will preface what I have to say with the suggestion that Mr. Hume's paper was probably written

some time before it was printed, and that this accounts for the omission of any mention of Mr. Swinhoe's two papers on the Pied Wagtails of China, published in the Proc. Zool. Soc. for 1870, pp. 120 and 129, of Mr. Brooks's description of *Motacilla cashmiriensis*, Proc. As. Soc. Beng. 1871, p. 210, and J. A. S. B. 1872, vol. xli. pt. ii. p. 82, and of my own remarks on *M. hodgsoni* in the same volume, p. 59. In the latter I expressed my opinion that *M. hodgsoni*, with which I was much disposed to identify *M. cashmiriensis* of Mr. Brooks, is a race peculiar to the Himalayas and parts of Central Asia, and distinct from *M. luzonica* and *M. japonica*. Mr. Hume looks upon all these supposed species as varying phases of plumage more or less advanced towards the full breeding-dress, which he describes, and which appears to correspond with *M. cashmiriensis*, Brooks. But in case any one should be disposed to give a name to this full breeding-stage, Mr. Hume proposes to call it *superciliaris*. It appears scarcely necessary to add to the very extensive existing synonymy of the species.

It is still far from clear that the opinion I expressed (*l. c.*) as to this black-chinned race being peculiar to the Himalayas, perhaps migrating in winter to those parts of the Indian plains which are near the hills, is not correct; for of all the forms of black-backed Wagtails from China described by Mr. Swinhoe, none agrees exactly with the Himalayan bird in full breeding-plumage, for which, in that case, the name *M. hodgsoni* would stand. I should mention that Mr. Swinhoe was apparently unaware that *M. luzoniensis*, or at all events the Indian bird known by that name, has a black back in summer plumage, and a grey one in winter garb; and I suspect that some of the species described by him are only phases of plumage. But without a series of specimens it would be hopeless to attempt to clear up the history of these birds.

With Mr. Hume's remarks on the identity of *M. dukhunensis*, Sykes, and *M. alba*, and the distinction of both from *M. personata*, Gould (= *dukhunensis* apud Jerdon), I quite agree, and I hope that Sykes's name will be disused by all Indian ornithologists. I must, however, differ from the statement that "in winter both *personata* and *dukhunensis* entirely

lose, in both sexes, the black of the head, which is replaced in the male by a dark, in the female by a lighter grey." I cannot speak positively as to *M. personata*; but in *M. alba* of India I have always seen a black or blackish crown to the head of the male throughout the winter. Perhaps, after all, my "blackish" and Mr. Hume's "dark grey" are the same thing. It is, however, confined to the crown, and is sufficiently well marked to be conspicuous at some distance.

The fifth paper in 'Stray Feathers' is devoted to Flamingoes. Mr. Hume shows that the African *Phœnicopterus minor* occurs in India, and that *P. rubidus*, Feilden (Ibis, 1868, p. 496), is the female in breeding-plumage, the brilliancy of the latter varying with the time of year, whilst the difference in the form of the bill, shown in Mr. Gray's figures, Ibis, 1869, p. 440, pls. xiii., xv., is sexual. In the same way the head figured in pl. xiii. No. 2, by Mr. Gray, and said to be that of a very old Indian example of *P. antiquorum*, is stated by Mr. Hume to represent the form of bill peculiar to the female of that species.

A note on "a new (?) Polyplectron" describes some tail-feathers obtained from the Lushai country, and differing from those pertaining to either the Assamese and Bhotan species, usually known as *P. chinquis*, Temm., or the Malayan *P. bicalcaratum*, L.: Mr. Hume considers it probable that the Lushai bird is the true *P. chinquis* of the 'Planches Coloriées,' pl. 539, and that the Assam species must stand as *P. tibetanum* (L.); but in case the Lushai bird should be new, he proposes to call it "*intermedius*"*. The necessity for a new name is as little apparent here as in the case of the Black-backed Wagtail in breeding-plumage; but Mr. Hume's fear of being anticipated by some other ornithologist, as in the unfortunate instance which decided him upon becoming his own editor, evidently induces him to give names on the chance of their being perpetuated. The practice is common enough, it is true; but it is, I think, not followed by the best naturalists.

* I am indebted to Mr. Elliot for calling my attention to the fact that *P. chinquis*, Temm., i. e. *P. tibetanum*, L., has already been divided into three species by Mr. G. R. Gray (*conf. Elliot, Phasianidæ*, vol. i.).

But there is something else to notice in the particular case of *Polyplectron intermedium*. Not only is the name given to a race which is, by the author of the title, believed to be the true *P. chinquis*, Temm., but it is given to no complete specimen of the bird, but merely to a few tail-feathers. Against this practice I beg to protest. It is bad enough that, as in the *Dicranoceras* of Marsh, three generic names should be given to different bones of the same fossil mammal: but this is, to a certain extent, inevitable; for only fragments of extinct animals are usually found. But with living species it might at least be required that, to avoid confusion, each describer should have a complete specimen before him, and that names given to tail-feathers of birds and similar fragments should not be recognized. For if one name is applied to the tail-feathers, why should not a second be given to the quills, and a third to the head or legs? and how is any one to identify a bird with a supposed species of which merely the tail-feathers are known? A well-known naturalist lately described as the type of a new genus and species the skull of a tortoise, on the carapace of which he had already founded another genus and species; and I believe that no rule would be more worthy of general acceptance amongst naturalists than one specifying that all names given to imperfect specimens should be null and void, in the same manner as MS. names. The history of the supposed species of *Argus* Pheasants recently founded on a few feathers believed to belong to birds unknown to science is instructive on this subject, since the original author of the name first given now seems to doubt whether any of the feathers in question belong to birds of the genus *Argus* at all, whilst some of the feathers figured in Mr. Elliot's 'Monograph of the Phasianidæ' as primaries of one of the unknown species are declared to be rectrices of *Pavo muticus*! (Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. July 1872, p. 67).

To return to 'Stray Feathers.' In a note on the Skylarks of India, Mr. Hume considers that there are two well-marked species, one a form of *Alauda arvensis*, L., the other the bird (comprising several local varieties) commonly known as *A.*

gulgula, Franklin, for which Mr. Hume adopts as the oldest name *A. malabarica*, Scopoli, under the belief that the figure in Sonnerat's book, upon which Scopoli's name was founded, represents the rufous bird inhabiting the Nilgiri hills in Southern India. Against this use of Scopoli's name I must enter a *caveat*. Dr. Jerdon's *Alauda malabarica* was, I believe, *Spizalauda deva* (cf. J. A. S. B. vol. xxxviii. pt. ii. p. 183, and vol. xxxix. pt. ii. p. 119); and I am told by Lord Walden that Dr. Jerdon, after his return to England, on seeing a copy of Sonnerat's work with coloured plates, satisfied himself that his identification of Scopoli's bird was correct. If this be the case, *Spizalauda deva* will become *S. malabarica*, and the Nilgiri Skylark will require a name, if it be necessary to separate it from *A. gulgula*, Frankl.; but Jerdon, who knew both races well, did not separate them, and Mr. Hume's opinion also tends towards union.

I pass on to what I cannot but consider the most important subject treated in the whole number, the Ornithology of Sind. Mr. Hume's short note is, so far as I know, the first attempt at any general account of the avifauna of one of the most remarkable parts of India, although a few of the most important birds met with in Sind were mentioned in a letter from Mr. Hume, printed in last year's 'Ibis,' p. 46. My own experience of the province is small; but so far as it goes, it entirely agrees with Mr. Hume's description; and as regards the interest of the matter to myself, I can only say that for years I have been in hopes of making such a collection of Sind birds as Mr. Hume has succeeded in bringing together, and I sincerely trust that he will give, as he promises, a complete list of the birds he has obtained in the province. Meantime I have one or two brief remarks to make on the species mentioned.

Blandfordius striatulus, which, however, is not described, is probably a new genus as well as species; at least I do not think I have met with the description of the genus elsewhere in ornithology. If the generic name is, as I presume, a compliment to myself, and the *d* in the middle is one of the numerous additions with which, as every writer who has suffered knows,

Calcutta printers have a wonderful habit of embellishing the works that come under their hands*, I must point out that for many years past there has been a genus *Blanfordia* of Arthur Adams established amongst the Mollusca, and that it will be better to use some other appellation.

Pyrrhulauda affinis, Blyth, which I obtained near Karachi, proves to be identical with *P. melanauchen* of Cabanis. I have compared a specimen from Baluchistan with the type of Blyth's species in Mr. Gould's collection, and with specimens of *P. melanauchen* collected by myself on the coast of the Red Sea. I have no faith in the occurrence of this species in Madras.

The last paper in '*Stray Feathers*' merely announces the first draft of a conspectus of all the species of birds, so far as is known to the author, hitherto observed in any part of India—the latter name being used in a very wide sense, as Mr. Hume makes it to include not only Cashmere, Nepal, and Sikkim, but Ladak, and even Yarkand. I doubt if the admission of the latter country is advisable, because, if Yarkand be considered part of India, why are Afghanistan, Kelat, and, for that matter, Persia left out? Surely Yarkand has no claim, either on zoological, geographical, ethnological, or political grounds, to be included in India, however little we may be desirous that it should be made part of Russia. I quite agree with Mr. Hume in thinking that a list of the avifauna of India should include the birds of all countries belonging to the government of British India or dependent upon it, together with Ceylon; but since this limit is not coincident with the boundary of any marked zoological province, it would be, I think, well to omit all regions outside the line which marks the British rule.

The conspectus promised will be no mere list, since Mr. Hume promises many most valuable notes on nidification, and

* In the present work errors in the spelling of names are rather frequent; thus on p. 25, Captain Shelley's name is spelt Shelly; pp. 31-35, Captain Feilden is called Captain Fielden; on p. 45, *Melizophilus striatus*, Brookes, appears instead of Brooks; and on page 49, Sharp instead of Sharpe is quoted as the author of the '*Monograph of Alcedinidae*.' Those who have had to do with Calcutta printers well know the extreme difficulty of avoiding such mistakes.

descriptions and measurements of all species not included in Jerdon's 'Birds of India.' That such a work will be a most valuable boon to the ornithologists of India there can be no doubt whatever. All that is needed to perfect the work, is that some European ornithologist, with the requisite leisure and access to books, should correct the synonymy of the Indian birds. How necessary a careful work of this kind is one instance may serve to show. *Circus pallidus*, Sykes, is quoted in two instances in 'The Ibis' for last year, as the oldest name of the Pale-chested Harrier. The same mistake is made by Mr. Gray in his 'Hand-list of Birds.' Yet Sir A. Smith's name, *C. swainsoni*, has priority by two years, having been first published in the 'South African Quarterly Journal' for 1830, p. 384, whilst Sykes's name was not published before 1832 (P. Z. S. p. 80).

P.S. Whilst the preceding paper was passing through the press, I received, by post, the second part of 'Stray Feathers,' comprising Nos. 2, 3, and 4, published together in February of this year. This part consists of no less than 273 pages, 200 of which are devoted to a valuable paper by Mr. Hume on the ornithology of Sind, containing a diary of the author's journey through the province, and of his voyage along the Makran coast to Muscat, in Arabia, together with copious notes of the birds collected. For several of these, "provisional" names are proposed. I can here only call attention to this paper, which I believe to be the most important contribution to Indian ornithology that has appeared for several years.

The other papers in the present part of 'Stray Feathers' are:—A list of the birds known to occur in the Andaman and Nicobar islands, by Mr. V. Ball; Notes upon some of the Indian and European Eagles (*A. mogilnik*, *A. nævia*, and the forms hitherto confounded with them), by Mr. A. V. Brooks; Descriptions of the following novelties by Mr. Hume:—*Collocalia innominata* and *Brachypodius fuscoflavescens*, from the Andaman Islands; *Pellorneum minus*, from Thayetmyo, Pegu; *Blanfordius striatulus*, nov. gen. et sp. (a Malurine bird, near

Suya), from Karachi, Sind; *Carpophaga palumboides* and *Mareca albogularis*, from the Andamans. The remaining papers, all by Mr. Hume, are:—Additional notes on the avifauna of the Andamans; notes on *Spizaetus kienerii*; and shorter notes on the eggs of *Megapodius nicobaricus*, on *Indicator xanthonotus*, on an Eagle-Owl from Kulu, to be called *Bubo hemachalanus* if distinct from *B. maximus*, on *Archibuteo hemiptilopus*, *Procarduelis mandellii*, recognized as identical with *P. rubescens* (Mr. Hume explains his mistake in redescribing this bird), on the occurrence of *Poliornis liventer*, Temm., at Thayet Myo, on a *Spizaetus* from Travancore, described as *S. sphynx*, on *Chelidon urbica*, from the Nilgiri hills, on a *lutino* of *Palæornis rosa*, and on the occurrence of *Parus cinereus* at Purneah.

XXV.—*Descriptions of a new Jay and a new Woodpecker from Persia.* By WILLIAM T. BLANFORD, F.G.S., C.M.Z.S.

GARRULUS HYRCANUS, sp. nov.

G. affinis G. glandario, sed minor; tarso brevior; pilei plumis nigris anguste rufescenti-vel rufo-schistaceo marginatis, haud albido; gulâ isabellinâ in colorem saturatiorem pectoris gradatim transeunte, remige secundario penultimo et plerumque antepenultimo maculâ ferrugineâ magnâ ad pogonium externum signatis.

Long. alæ 6·5, caudæ 5·2, tarsi 1·6, rostri a fr. 1·2.

Hab. in sylvis Hyrcaniæ, hodie Mazendaran dictæ, in parte septentrionali regni recentis Persici haud procul a litore maris Caspii.

Head above black, the feathers with narrow rufous edges, which are isabelline towards the forehead, rufous slaty behind, never white as in *G. glandarius* and *G. japonicus*, but rather resembling those in *G. brandti*; sides of head pale rufous, the ear-coverts being decidedly paler than the back. A black patch at the base of the lower mandible extending a short distance down the side of the throat, but not on to the lores. Hind neck and back vinaceous, with a grey tinge, upper tail-coverts white. Tail brownish black, the central feathers and outer webs of some of the others with imperfect narrow bluish